

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a user, comprising:
 - (A) a client computer system, wherein said client computer system is a digital computer;
 - (B) a local area network connected to said client computer system;
 - (C) a server computer connected to said local area network to provide a means of communicating between said local area network and one or more external communication channels;
 - (D) a satellite communication channel connected to said server computer by a radio frequency link; and
 - (E) an information provider connected to one or more external communication channels for the purpose of providing information to one or more said client computer systems.
2. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a personal computer.
3. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a Macintosh computer.
4. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a computer workstation.
5. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user

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as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a mini computer.

6. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a mainframe computer.

7. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a special purpose digital computer.

8. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Windows operating system.

9. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Windows 95 operating system.

10. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Windows NT operating system.

11. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Macintosh operating system.

12. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Unix operating system.

13. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Linux operating system.

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- 1 14. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user,
2 as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has an OS/2 operating system.
- 3 15. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a
4 user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said local area network is a IPX network.
- 5 16. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a
6 user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said local area network is a IP network.
- 7 17. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a
8 user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said information provider is an internet service
9 provider.
- 10 18. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a
11 user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said information provider is a software distributor.
- 12 19. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a
13 user, as recited in claim 1, further comprising: a modem electrically connected to said
14 server computer to transmit data electronically to a telephone land line.
- 15 20. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider
16 and a user, comprising:
17 (A) receiving data from said information service provider by a satellite
18 communications channel; and
19 (B) conveying said received data across a local area network to one or more digital
20 computer systems.
- 21 21. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider
22 and a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising:

1 a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising: checking to determine if said received
2 data has an IP format.

3 28. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider
4 and a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising: checking to determine if said
5 received data has a packetized format.

6 29. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider
7 and a user, as recited in claim 20, wherein said one or more digital computer systems are
8 connected electrically by a local area network.

9 30. A method for controlling the transfer of information between an information service
10 provider and a user, comprising:

11 (A) receiving data from said information service, wherein said received data has a
12 protocol identifier;

13 (B) determining the protocol of said received data; and

14 (C) delivering said data according to said protocol of said received data to a client
15 computer.

16 31. A method for controlling the transfer of information between an information service
17 provider and a user, as recited in claim 30, further comprising:

18 (D) receiving a return packet of data from said client computer.

19 32. A method for controlling the transfer of information between an information service
20 provider and a user, as recited in claim 31, further comprising:

21 (E) delivering said returned packet of data from said client computer to said
22 information service provider.

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- 1 33. A computer program to manage communications between an information service
2 provider and a user, comprising:
- 3 (A) a routine for receiving information from said information service;
4 (B) a routine for testing said received information to determine the source of said
5 information;
6 (C) a routine for delivering said received information to a digital computer system.
- 7 34. A computer program to manage communications between an information service
8 provider and a user, as recited in claim 33, further comprising: a routine for determining
9 an age value for said received information.
- 10 35. A computer program to manage communications between an information service
11 provider and a user, as recited in claim 33, further comprising: a routine for replacing old
12 received information with newer received information.
- 13 36. A system for managing the communications between an information service provider and
14 a user, comprising:
- 15 (A) a digital computer system connected to a local area network;
16 (B) a first interface device for communicating between said local area network and a
17 satellite communication channel;
18 (C) a first connection between said satellite communication channel and a source of
19 information;
20 (D) a second connection between said land line communication channel and a source
21 of information; and
22 (E) a means for controlling the flow of information between said digital computer

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system and said source of information.

- 37. A system for managing the communications between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 36 further comprising a second interface device for communicating between said local area network and a land line.
- 38. A system for managing the communications between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 36 further comprising a second interface device for communicating between said local area network and a wireless channel.
- 39. A system for managing the communications between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 36 further comprising a second interface device for communicating with said local area network to a satellite.
- 40. A system for managing the communications between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 36 further comprising a second interface device for communicating with said local area network to a routed channel.

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